

Dallas VAMC Welcomes Dr. Jonathan Perlin, VA Under Secretary for Health

President Bush's nomination of Dr. Jonathan Perlin as VA Under Secretary for Health was confirmed by the Senate April 29. During his recent visit to Dallas VAMC, Dr. Perlin said one of his first duties as VA Under Secretary was to announce Betty Bolin Brown's selection as VANTHCS Director. He also acknowledged Ms. Brown as a leader to bring about remarkable improvements since arriving to Dallas in January.

Dr. Perlin was in Dallas to address a national Psychology conference but had time for a brief tour at Dallas VAMC before returning to Washington, D.C. (top right). *Pictured l to r:* Nancy Sampson, Dr. Perlin, Casandra Womack, Sharon Muncrief, and Ms. Brown.



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From the Director...



Betty Bolin Brown

I am excited to be named Director of VANTHCS and honored to lead such a great group of dedicated employees. I've worked at several levels of VHA during my VA career and enjoy the medical center setting most. I look forward to opportunities such as All Employee meetings and some "fun" activities too where I can meet each of you. I want us to get to know each other and venture outside of our familiar surroundings to learn about hospital services other than our own. We're all busy, but our patients appreciate someone who can point them in the right direction when they've lost their way. I've been here since January and still carry my cell phone when I go into unfamiliar territory. So if you see me roaming the halls with a confused look on my face, please return me to the Executive Office. I look forward to what we can accomplish together at VANTHCS!

Here's some background info on our new director

Betty Bolin Brown was notified of her appointment as Director of VA North Texas Health Care System on April 29. She had served as Acting Director since January. As System Director, Ms. Brown has overall responsibility for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling the medical, administrative, and supportive operations of VA North Texas Health Care System. She is responsible for maintaining and improving the organization's health care resources and VA relationships with federal, state, local, other affiliated organizations, and various civic groups.

Prior to her appointment as Director of VANTHCS, Ms. Brown was Director of Huntington VAMC in W.Va. Ms. Brown served as Acting Director at Chillicothe VAMC in Ohio from 2002 to 2003. She was VISN 10's Deputy Network Director in Cincinnati from 2001 to 2003. Ms. Brown served as Associate Director at Richmond VAMC in Va from 1998 to 2001 and Acting Director at Salisbury VAMC in N.C. in 1998, and Chief Operating Officer of VISN 6 in Durham, N.C. from 1997 to 1998. From 1995 to 1997, she was the Associate Director at the VAMC Fayetteville and later served as Acting Director. Ms. Brown was Associate Director Trainee and Acting Assistant Director of Durham VAMC from 1994 to 1995. She was QI Consultant/Manager for the Southern Region from 1990 to 1994. From 1989 to 1990, she served as Chief of the Dallas Office of the Salt Lake Employee Education System. Ms. Brown began her VA career at Shreveport VAMC where she worked as Chief and Counselor of the Substance Abuse Program from 1980 to 1985, and later worked as the QA Coordinator from 1985 to 1989. Prior to joining VA, Ms. Brown taught in the public school system and at the college level.

Ms. Brown received an Ed.D from Louisiana State University in 1969. She received her M.S. degree from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., in 1967, and B.S. degree in 1963. She is a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

"One Nation, One Moment"



The White House Commission on Remembrance goes with "One Nation, One Moment" in support of the "Moment of Remembrance"... asking all Americans to pause for a moment of silence on May 30, Memorial Day, at 3 p.m. in honor of our fallen veterans. Flags should be flown at half staff.

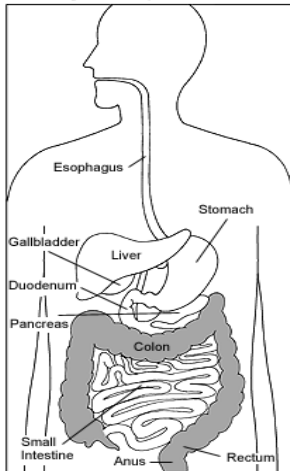


National Advocate for Mental Illness Visits Dallas VAMC

Recently we were honored to host Moe Armstrong, director of Consumer and Family Affairs for Vinfen Corp. in Cambridge, Mass. Armstrong established the Peer Educators' Project that believes people with mental illness and their families are an educational resource to learn how to live with mental illness as well as the Vet-to-Vet program that is active at VANTHCS and many VAMCs nationwide. Armstrong has been mentally ill for 35 years and struggles with his own mental illness every day. Armstrong met with veterans in the Day Treatment Center and challenged them to use their peers as sources of support in their move from mental illness and/or substance abuse into recovery.



The Digestive System

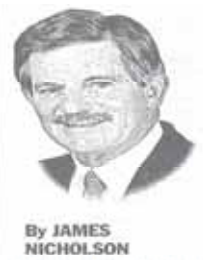


What do you know about colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is the second cancer killer in the nation according to the American Cancer Society, affects both men and women, as well as all racial and ethnic groups. Especially at risk are those: age 50 and older; family history of colon or rectal cancer, chronic colitis, breast, prostate, testicular, polyps or glandular cancer; personal history of inflammatory bowel disease including chronic colitis or Crohn's disease; eating a diet high in fat and low in fiber; physical inactivity. Early screening saves lives, and although colorectal cancer can occur without any symptoms, some include constipation or diarrhea for 1-2 weeks; abdominal gas pain, cramps, feeling that the bowel has not emptied completely; weight loss for unknown reason; anemia, fatigue in men or older women; and red or dark blood in or on the stools or rectal bleeding. Prevention is the key. Ask your doctor about colorectal screenings during your next visit.

A proud history of service. by Secretary of Veterans Affairs reprinted from *Federal Times* (DC), 5/2/05

All Americans honor the sacrifice and commitment of the troops who serve on the front lines in the war on terrorism - and rightly so. Their achievements are worthy of our highest praise. So, too, are the efforts of another army - the 1.85 million men and women who make up the federal civilian work force, the workers we honor during Public Service Recognition Week. These federal workers and their contributions to our nation are a bedrock of support for all Americans. At the Veterans Affairs Department, I'm privileged to lead 230,000 dedicated employees whose passion for public service and for our veterans and their families sets a new standard for excellence. As an example, last fall, some senior staff members in VA's Office of Information and Technology developed a volunteer program to help disabled service members returning from Iraq gain work experience while awaiting their discharges. This internship program, called "Vet IT," opens the door to new professional opportunities, hopefully at VA. To date, we have hired 10 of these young veterans and hope to hire more. The creativity, caring and compassion demonstrated by those who conceived and implemented this program reflect the best traditions of VA. They also typify the actions of countless other public servants whose passion for helping others reigns supreme. It is the men and women of the federal government who protect our borders and keep our skies, waterways and lands clean and safe to enjoy. They manage and maintain our national parks and monuments, acting as stewards of our legacy for the generations to follow. These are people of vision, who expand our horizons in space, science and medicine. I can think of few words more appropriate than those of George Washington, who wrote in 1775, "Every post is honorable in which a man can serve his country." Those who serve in our federal government do more than meet the day-to-day needs of a growing nation. They are the foundation on which this nation has relied for more than two centuries. It is a legacy as ingrained in the United States as our Constitution itself, serving as a source of pride for all who contribute through public service.



By JAMES NICHOLSON



**National Nurses Week,
May 6-12**

Nurses are the backbone of VA health care. VANTHCS is proud to recognize our nurses, and we can't thank you enough for answering the call to serve our Nation's defenders who come to us for world-class care. You — VA's nurses — are the first line of care and compassion that greets our veterans at a VA medical facility. All of you here, together with your fellow nurses around the country, know better than anyone the extent of the sacrifice that our service men and women are making on behalf of all Americans. It is you who mend broken bodies and bind wounded spirits.

Everyone enrolled in our health care system is at one time cared for by a nurse. Nursing is not easy work, but in addition to providing care around the clock, VA nurses are among the strongest advocates of improving quality of care through education and training. That is why VA nurses are some of the best trained and best educated in the world.



Nursing Service formally recognized some of its dedicated staff this week during a ceremony in the Dallas VAMC atrium. Excellence in Nursing Awards were presented *l to r*: **Wanda Payne, RN**: a committed and dedicated Operating Room Nurse who identifies ways to improve the utilization of resources; **Lynette Shamlin, Nursing Assistant**: for her contributions in quality patient care and for working with all levels of staff; **Rick Vignaux, RN**: a Nurse Manager in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit who demonstrates leadership by promoting team building and staff development; and **Patricia Chambers, LVN**: a dedicated and self-motivated member of the Primary Care Clinic team who recognizes and promotes the importance of compliance with preventive screenings.

Congratulations, Nurses!!



VANTHCS also honored six nurses who were nominated by their peers to the Great 100. They will be recognized at the Meyerson Symphony Center on May 11. They are *l to r*: **Melinda Kaiser-Mcgowen** (Mental Health Access Clinic); **Furqan Khan** (TCU); **Frances Morrison** (TeleNurse); **Cynthia Tate** (5A Tele); **Shirley Thornton** (8A); and **Richard Vignaux** (SCI).

We Do Make A Difference

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to this Dental facility at the Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic for their kind attention and professional environment they display at their facility. Their mannerism is always helpful and respectful. All the personnel are wonderful to talk to for any help or services. Please express my gratitude to them.

C. Chase

There are many employees that make this hospital one to be proud of. It needs to be recognized for its service to the veterans of our community and surrounding area. Having the VA Center in Bonham makes it possible for us to receive the care we need without having to travel more than 100 miles. I for one appreciate all that you and your staff do for the veterans you serve.

W. Gilbert

I would like to commend the nurses and staff of Floor 5 for the excellent care they gave me during my hospitalization from April 24 - 26, 2005. They continually went above and beyond their expected professional duties in assisting me with all my patient care needs especially since I was in moderate respiratory distress and very anxious. I was very impressed with your nurses' concerns over my discharge needs.

S. Harbour

I would like to take this opportunity to compliment the entire staff at this facility. I was here for a week in early April on the 5th floor and at the end of April on the 4th floor. Both times the treatment was of the highest standard. But the best thing was the courtesy, friendliness, and compassion I received. I'm sure all of you receive your share of complaints, but if those people were treated by the people I was treated by, let me assure you it is unjustified.

E. LeBlanc

Congratulations to **Gary Stone**, addiction therapist at Bonham's Domiciliary, honored as "Outstanding VA Employee of the Month" by Texas Veterans Commission for April 2005.

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve recognized **Dr. Brent Armstrong** as a patriotic employer by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Force.

We are pleased to announce among VISN 17 VAVS Program Managers, **Steve Stous** was selected as a recipient of the American Spirit Award, Student Recruitment Category. He will be honored at the VAVS National Advisory Committee 58th Annual Meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz.

During tracer rounds recently, two of our employees in the GI lab performed in an outstanding manner! **Donna Hunter** effectively explained the medication management standards for the GI lab, and **Richard Harvey** was very knowledgeable and adept at answering all questions. Gift certificates to the VA Canteen were distributed to them as a token of appreciation for a job well done.

Many of you are aware we had a small fire outside the main entrance recently. Someone threw down a cigarette and caught a bush on fire. The quick thinking and action of Valet employee **Mark Thompson** prevented a potentially harmful situation. Other employees and CWT workers in Valet immediately stepped in to help, and all received gift certificates to the VA Canteen as a token of appreciation for a job well done. They are: **Donna Anderson, JoAnn Howard, Glenn Streat, Dennis Kamber, Sonja Nichols, Tabitha Rollings, Donald Whitlock, Albert Persley, John Willars, Donald Edwards;** and CWTs **Horace Edwards, Lee Preston, Valerie Clark, Ed Nettles, Michael Love, and Ron Cooper.**

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